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Meade

A Critical Examination [in
part] of Pennypacker's Life
of General George G.
Meade

BY

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- - Illinois.

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TIVOLI, N. Y.,

FRANK O. GREEN,

1901.



Dana on Meade and Humphreys.

"The Ninth Corps was moved by rail to Annapolis, where it was recruited up to about twenty-five thousand men. As the time for action neared it was set in motion, and by easy marches reached and re-enforced the Army of the Potomac on the morning of the 6th of May, in the midst of the battle of the Wilderness. It was not formally incorporated with that army until later, but, by a sort of fiction, it was held to be a distinct army, Burnside acting in concert with Meade, and receiving his orders directly from Grant, as did Meade. These two armies were the excuse for Grant's personal presence, without actually superseding Meade.

"In my opinion the great soldier of the Army of the Potomac at this time was General Humphreys. He was the chief of staff to General Meade and was a strategist, a tactician, and an engineer. Humphreys was a fighter, too, and in this an exception to most engineers. He was a very interesting figure. He used to ride about in a black felt hat, the brim of which was turned down all around, making him look like a Quaker. He was very pleasing to deal with, unless you were fighting against him, and then he was not so pleasant. [He was a Quaker by descent.] * * * * * Humphreys was a very charming man, quite destitute of vanity. I think he had consented to go and serve with Meade as chief of staff out of pure patriotism. He preferred an active command, and eventually on the eve of the end, succeeded to the command of the [combined] Second [Third] Corps, and bore a conspicuous part in the Appomatox campaign.—Charles A. Dana's Recollections page 191-2.

"Before the army had recovered from its long march from Cold Harbor and the failure to capture [Petersburg] there was an unusual amount of controversy going on among the officers. Meade and Warren were so at loggerheads that Meade notified Warren that he must either ask to be relieved as corps-commander or he (Meade) would prefer charges against him. It seemed as if Meade grew more unpopular every day. Finally the difficulties between him and his subordinates became so serious that a change in the commander of the Army of the Potomac seemed probable. * * * * * Page 226

"The Fifth Corps having prepared the way, the whole army left the lines about Cold Harbor on schedule time, just as soon after nightfall on the 12th [June 1864] as its movements could be concealed from the observation of the enemy. It was in drawing orders for such complicated movements as these, along different roads and by different crossings, that the ability of General Humphreys, the chief of staff, was displayed. Everything went perfectly from the start". Page 218

"I had long known Meade to be a man of the worst possible temper, especially toward his subordinates. I think he had not a friend in the whole army. No man, no matter what his business or his service, approached him without being insulted in one way or another, and his own staff officers did not dare to speak to him unless first spoken to, for fear of either sneers or curses. The latter however, I had never heard him indulge in very violently, but he was said to apply them often without occasion, and without reason. At the same time, as far as I was able to ascertain, his generals had lost their confidence in him as a commander. His orders for the last series of assaults upon Petersburg, in which we lost ten thousand men without gaining any decisive advantage, were greatly criticised. They were, in effect, that he had found it impracticable to secure the co-operation of corps-commanders, and that, therefore, each one was to attack on his own account and do the best he could by himself. The consequence was

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To my Dear Friend and My Father's
Dearest Friend,

John Watts de Peyster,

Brevet Major General, N. Y.,

A. M., Litt. D., Ph. D., L. L. D., F. R. B. H. S.,

Æc., Æc., Æc.,

This Book is Affectionately Dedicated
BY THE AUTHOR.

PENNYPACKER'S "MEADE" UNDER SHARP FIRE.

Recently there appeared in the New York Mail & Express a review of the life of Gen'l Meade (Great Commanders Series) written by Mr. Pennypacker and published by D. Appleton & Company.

Admirably as the "Life" is written, we must take issue with the author of that work who blinded by his admiration for his hero, has failed to give credit to one other person, who with Meade, should be awarded praise for the plans which placed that commander upon the pedestal.

We notice that as long as Meade is not eclipsed by the presence of a superior officer, the credit for all successes is given him, with no mention of the name of the Adlatus whose carefully worked out projects insured the harvest.

When the superior is present, we find the name of Gen'l Meade's Chief of Staff joined with that of his chief, but in such a way as to make the contrast all the more glaring, in other words to make the claim of superiority stronger.

We feel sure that had Meade lived, he would have spoken in no uncertain language of how much he was indebted to his friend and admirable Chief of Staff.

We are therefore compelled to speak for one who was too modest to parade his own accomplishments save in the line of duty. Our recital of these duties therefore commences from the 8th day of July, 1863, when Major Gen'l A. A. Humphreys accepted the position of Chief of Staff of the Army of the Potomac.

We are aware that this position was offered to him at Frederick, Md., but was declined because of the then impending battle which occurred at Gettysburg, Penn., in which he again, on the afternoon of July 2nd, under a terrific fire which searched his lines through and through, and when attacked in front and flank by superior forces, performed a difficult maneuver, suffering heavy loss in killed and wounded, once more proclaiming himself to the army as a consummate tactician.

Our army in that struggle had lost by wounds and death two bright lights, who would have again made their marks had either of them had the command of the forces sent out to determine by what roads Lee had withdrawn from the battlefield, what would be the probable line of retreat of the Confederate army, what were the topographical features, what works had been erected, if any, to delay a pursuing force, and where their lines could be pierced, cut to pieces, and an orderly retreat turned into a disorderly mass of fleeing frenzied soldiers.

Our army contained at that time the one man who was capable for such work. True it was he was upon the Staff, but when the affairs of a nation are at a low ebb, position and tradition must yield to the demand, and the Commanding General was at fault when he failed to avail of this, the only sure means of inflicting upon his enemy a mortal wound.

That the enemy were shaken in their morale from the terrible struggle of a three day's battle is probably true, and a well directed thrust, pushed home, would

have sent them flying from the field, converting the retreat into a disorganized mass of flying fugitives. Had a force been sent to the Cashtown Pass, that of Fairfield would have been opened at once, we should have had some rear guard actions, and would have arrived upon the ground at Williamsport just as soon as Lee.

How often this has been performed in past ages it is needless to point out, and we are of the belief such were the views of the Chief of Staff, though he records this affair in cautious language. See "Gettysburg to the Rapidan", p. 3 & 7. The Nation held and still holds Gen'l Meade responsible for this failure, and no glossing over it, or meretricious treatment, can or will absolve him from that glaring error.

Gettysburg, the reconnoissance to the Fairfield Pass, the flank movement or march to Williamsport, Md., had by that time determined the personal equation of each of the several Corps commanders; of this fact the Commanding General must have been aware; still, in deference to the opinion of all (except two commanders), the attack was put off until a better opinion could be formed of the strength of the enemy's works.

"Councils of War never fight"; the personal equation is also a prominent factor; it remained with but one man to say whether the army should fight or not; neither do we find the views of his Chief of Staff expressed at that meeting, though we are of the opinion that he was not averse to a trial of strength.

Both armies occupied good positions; that of the Confederates covered ground of about ten miles naturally strong. Their flanks could not be turned; the ground from their left to near their right centre presented difficult topographical features to an attacking force; towards their right and right centre the ground was more open; though strong, it was more favorable for attacking; we should have lost many men in so doing, but had the attack been successful our enemy would have been cut in two, both roads leading to the fords of the Potomac would have been in our possession, also their army.

The strength of both armies was nearly equal. On the supposition that at that time it required about five thousand men to hold a front of one mile of rifle-pits, the Confederates had but very few men for a reserve force; that force could not have been larger than ten thousand. On our part, our line of rifle-pits being less in length than those of the enemy, we could have spared for the assault at least twenty-five thousand men.

The only ground which was at all favorable for an attack was opposite our left; though some features of it were unfavorable, they were not insurmountable. We refer to that portion which is crossed by the Williamsport road, not the pike.

This ground could not have escaped the eyes of the Commanding General, and did not escape those of his Chief of Staff; and very likely it had been selected as the point to deliver the assault on the morning of July 14th, 1863, when moving forward that morning we found the enemy had crossed the Potomac.

The Administration was anxious the invaders should be driven from Northern soil, was in fact willing to stand sponsor for failure should it take place, and our people would have supported the attempt, and submitted without a murmur had we suffered a defeat.

We are compelled to record our opinion that the Commanding General of Williamsport is not the one of Gettysburg.

When Gen. Humphreys gave testimony before the Committee on the Conduct

of the War, his evidence was the consensus of that of the Army; a direct question would have elicited the answer sought; ordinarily more was kept back than was uttered.

Those who have read "The Life" understand the movements of both armies after Maryland was evacuated; but we have something to say regarding the movements of the 3rd Corps when before and in Manassas Gap, backed by two other Corps of the Army of the Potomac.

Had such dilatory movements, (those of the 3rd Corps of the Union Army) occurred in an European force, the Commander of that unit which had been guilty of such an action would have been brought before a court, tried, found guilty and shot.

Though the actions of the Commander of the 3rd Corps ruined the carefully planned projects of the chief of Staff for striking Lee with the units of his army disjointed, the generosity of the Commander of the Army of the Potomac interfered with the meting out to him of his just rewards, due to his incompetency, and he was still permitted to command his Corps.

At that time the Gap (Manassas) was filled with blackberries, which were partaken of by the troops left by Lee to hold the Gap until his army had passed, without their giving any attention to the Union troops, and when their bellies could hold no more of that fruit they withdrew, leaving to our forces such of the berries as they could not carry away.

We are compelled to remark again, that with this exhibition of generosity on the part of the Commanding General, he must assume the whole responsibility of the failure to strike Lee while in march, and the onus cannot be put on anyone else's shoulders. He had his remedy, but failed to use it.

Light may be thrown upon the relations which existed between the Commanding General and the 3rd Corp Commander, wherein the latter advises the former how to obtain information of the enemy. See Serial No. 45, p. 667, "Official Records of the Rebellion".

There was at the Hd. Qrs. of the Army of the Potomac a Provost Marshal General whose duties were to find out just this information, while other Corps Commanders could have given some, but so far as the Official Records go they fail to show it.

There were other means of obtaining information, such as forcing our enemy to display his line of battle by a show of force on our part sufficient to cause him to display his strength, etc.

We also perceive the magnanimous treatment of this officer's conduct by the author of "Gettysburg to the Rapidan", in his failure to comprehend what was required of him to produce results, rendering abortive those peerless projects in Logistics and Strategy of the Chief of Staff of the Army of the Potomac.

Regarding the curious facts that both Commanding Generals had submitted their resignations to their respective governments, and the remarks of General Fitzhugh Lee upon that of Lee's "that the removal of Meade would have been an act of kindness to the Confederates", we agree with him, for had Meade's request been granted, his eminent Chief of Staff would have also been relieved, and the Confederate Army would then have had no difficulty in understanding the movements of the Army of the Potomac. See pages 5 and 222 of the "Life".

By adopting "the unfortunatate misapprehension" of his rear-guard commanders as to the presence of Lee's army at Culpepper Court House, Meade placed his

whole army in a disadvantageous position so far as fighting was concerned, and jeopardized Washington, and this in the face of the advice of his Chief of Staff, who saw clearly what was the purport of the movement on the part of Lee.

Just here we must admit upon the scene an aside which has more or less bearing upon the subject.

During the discussion as to what the movement of Lee meant, the Chief of Staff in a very lucid manner explained the whole movement to the Commanding General of the Army of the Potomac who, carried away in his belief that Lee intended to give him battle at Culpepper, endeavored to bully the Chief of Staff into the same belief; some words were said by Meade, to which no reply was made, the Chief of Staff simply rising from his seat on the opposite side of the table and looking his Chief steadily in the eyes when he abruptly left the tent.

This was the first and only attempt at bullying his Chief of Staff, and Meade ever afterwards listened and heeded the advice given him.

We have furthermore to add that the advice given and not heeded by Meade was confirmed that night by advices received from the cavalry, who had failed to transmit as required by orders information of the crossing of the Confederate Army on the upper Rappahannock near Sulphur Springs.

Our cavalry were not placed there for fighting, but for the purpose of observing and giving information of the presence of Lee as soon as possible; this officer violated his instructions, placing our army in a dangerous position; he should have been arrested, brought before a Drum Head Court Martial, tried and shot.

Had the Chief of Staff the command of that army, such would have been his fate.

News of the presence of Confederates at the Sulphur Springs, was brought to Hd. Qrs. by Lieut. Nicolas Nolan of the 6th U. S. Cavalry, who was shot in the arm whilst cutting his way through a party of the enemy's cavalry, which endeavored to capture him, but escaped, thanks to the speed of his horse.

Fortune favored us there; had her face been turned away, another story would have been told, and the sun for Meade would have set forever.

With the news that our right flank had been turned, that Lee was nearer to Washington than we, with our army partly on the right bank of the Rappahannock and distant some miles from the other portion, though within supporting distance, the momentous question for Meade was how to extricate himself from this unfortunate blunder.

The matter was handed to his Chief of Staff, who looking over carefully the situation, devised the scheme whereby the army was rescued from its then perilous position. Ceaseless marching was of first importance, day as well as night; this the army yielded to, knowing well the situation, and legs won; without them we should have lost.

During this extraordinary march of over 36 hours, the Corps Commanders rode in rear of their commands, ready to crush any force which might try to impede their progress; close communications were kept between them, (the Corps which was ahead and the Corps which followed); in one instance only was this close union between them broken, which will now be related.

"An army crawls upon its belly;" but in this case, legs were used in addition to the belly; most of our army had passed Bristoe Station, and over Broad Run, and were well on their way to Centreville, Va., leaving behind three corps and the Cavalry. These Corps were from the rear—the Cavalry, then the second Corps, mustering 8000 men; this force formed the rear guard: but in the action fought

at or near Bristoe but 3000 men were engaged, the balance having been detached as an escort to the train; beyond Broad Run and on the road to Centreville, was the 5th Corps, then the 3rd Corps.

It was surmised that some force of the enemy would make its appearance at Bristoe: for this reason, the 5th Corps was directed not to move until the 2nd Corps came up, the 3rd not to march until the 5th began to move.

By this arrangement it was expected to have three Corps ready to meet and crush any body of the enemy which should make its appearance at that place.

Gen'l Warren was informed of these orders, and directed to move as rapidly as as possible, and also of the probability of a force of the enemy coming down from the Warrenton Road to Bristoe.

As soon as the head of the 2nd Corps came in sight the 5th began to march, and upon its moving forward the 3rd marched, abandoning the 2nd to its fate.

To the soldier the booming of cannon and the sharp rattle of musketry is his very life and inspiration, but here we find two Corps marching from the field of battle, disobeying their orders and committing an offense which for a soldier merits the severest punishment under the Articles of War.

The Commanding General, upon learning that these Corps were not in connection with the 2nd, ordered them back, the head of the 5th reaching the 2nd at dusk; the Commander of that Corps having sometime before requested assistance.

It was however too late to concentrate our army for a general engagement. The 2nd Corps had been attacked by an overwhelming force, but held its ground, and when night fell withdrew, not defeated, but victorious. Lee had not moved as quickly as we.

Had these orders been obeyed by the Commanders of the 5th and 3rd Corps, we should and must have smashed in detail not only Hill's Corps but Ewell's also, as it was sometime before the latter arrived upon the ground, and after Hill had been engaged with the 2nd. Neither would it have been necessary to put in that foot note which is found at the bottom of pages 20 and 21 of "Gettysburg to the Rapidan," and the remarks comprised in the last part on page 36.

Thus was ruined an excellent plan which would have caught Lee when he was not expecting a fight. Fortune favored us, but we declined to partake of her favors; rebuffed as she had been, she continued to show us the way, but unfortunately we had with us men who were worse than nothing, and the Commanding General, so far as we have been able to discover, did not take steps to rid himself of incubuses who could not comprehend that which was plainly written for their guidance: he is therefor to blame, and more than his agents, for not assuming that responsibility which it was his plain duty to exercise.

Why was not the Gettysburg order applied to these Commanders? The cause of the Union was imperilled by their retention. We do not perceive any difference in the cases. See foot note on page 148 of the "Life".

And how must the Chief of Staff have felt when he saw the results of his careful work set aside as so much waste paper, work which caused much thought and care! Did he repine? No, not at all, but set to work with the same vigor, and devised other plans which were ruined by men intrusted with large commands. Is it any wonder that Lee was puzzled by the movements of Meade? No not his, but those of his Chief of Staff?

The putting together of a complicated machine, all its parts turned to a nicety, involves a thorough knowledge of what it shall accomplish; smoothness of working is essential to complete success. As the operations above described required

nicety of adjustment to prevent friction, it has been with us a matter of wonder why representatives of the Commanding General were not present with the 5th and 3rd Corps, armed with authority to compel compliance with the orders, which would have insured harmonious working.

One of these Corps Commanders had previously developed a weakness which had ruined one project, and here is another one afflicted with the same disease.

Tonics are administered to give strength to a weak member of the machine, and the symptoms of a break down are recognized long before its appearance; hence we fail to appreciate the "shaking objects of a rage so magnificent that it seemed capable of moving mountains."

The collapse has occurred; tonics are now of no avail, their administration but aggravating instead of strengthening.

Lee retires to the Rappahannock, and takes up a position upon the west bank of that river, his right resting at Kelly's ford, his left at Bealton, holding a bridge head upon the left bank and constructing cantonments for his army. The army of the Potomac advances; the 5th and 6th Corps form the right of our army, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Corps the left, numbering about 30,000 men. Opposing them were two divisions of Confederate troops of about 10,000 all told. At this ford (Kelly's) was an intrenched picket post held by some 300 men: we ford, attack this post with one brigade of troops and capture it, killing, wounding, and taking prisoners 300 in all, but fail to capture the high ground in rear, and move forward and towards Brandy Station as directed in the orders.

Oh that we had there some Roman or Napoleonic Commander to show our Generals how to ford a river, not by a brigade but by divisions, and once across how to push forward and engage our foe, not allowing him to slip through our fingers as Lee did that night! "Ye Gods and little fishes!" what a pother about the capture 300 men by 30,000, when more could have been gathered in by a more skillful fisher!

A "tool" which has lost its edge is sent to the repair shop and inspected; if worth the trouble it is honed, if not it is thrown aside as worthless. Of such a character was the Commander of the 3rd Corps that no amount of honing could make his edge hold for any length of time, though possibly a representative of the Commanding General sent to him and remaining there, when the operations of the Campaign began, might have produced better results by constant association with the oil stone; but this does not appear to have been done.

He had failed in two important operations of the army and ruined combinations of a profound character, was still with the army, held command of one unit which was composed of as good material as any in the army, and he should not have been permitted to nullify its character.

Officers of high rank are assigned to the command of Corps by order of the President of the United States, and he alone can relieve them of that command, unless they are entirely unfitted for it. Politicians sometimes prevent such a relief; but if the facts are represented forcibly without malice, the order of the Commanding General will hold, and the officer's connection with the army is severed, forever. The good of the country is sought, not revenge.

Such drastic measures had once been applied to certain officers of our army, and the action of the General approved by the highest authority in our land. The same action could have been applied in this case but was not. The question will arise in the minds of all candid readers who was most to blame in the campaign of "Mine Run", the General, or one of his agents. The "love" of his Corps

Commander in this case ruined the General.

Time and space are the two elements which enter into the calculations of the marches of an army. These must be known to the utmost nicety. Topographical features must be grasped—whether the country is hilly or flat, the nature of the soil, ravines, water courses, width of roads, bridges, good condition or not, streams, wood, water, and grass, fords, depth of same, velocity of streams, nature of bottom, whether sandy, muddy, or rocky, height of banks of the streams.

This being acquired, then comes the depth which each of the several arms of the service will occupy, from the head of column to the rear.

In an army there are but very, very few men who, knowing all of the above, are unable to work out correctly just how long it will take an army to reach a certain place, starting from a given point and moving a certain number of miles an hour including halts.

Let there be taken for the sake of illustration the space which is occupied by a footman, a mounted man; and a gun horsed by six horses.

When in line, a footman occupies a frontage of 30 inches, and a pace is equal to 30 inches. A Company of infantry is now 104 strong; when in double rank it presents a front of 52 men; therefore the frontage occupied by a company will be 52 multiplied by 30, and will equal 1560 inches.

A Battalion is composed of four companies, with intervals of 90 inches between companies, of which there are three, equal to 270 inches, therefore the frontage will be 1560 multiplied by 4, plus 270 inches; equal to 6510 inches.

A Regiment is composed of three battalions of four companies each, with intervals of 24 paces between battalions, of which there are two, equal to 1440 inches. The Sergt Major is posted on the left of the regt, at an interval of six paces, equal to 180 inches: the Band is posted 24 paces from the right of the regt. and occupies a front of 24 paces; 24 paces standing to its right is the Colonel; color party, 4 men multiplied by 30 inches, equals 120 inches.: therefore the frontage of a regt will be 6510 multiplied by 3, plus 1440, plus 180, plus 720, plus 720, plus 720, plus 120, which equals 23,430 inches or 651 yds.

With brigades composed of 3 Regts. of 3 batts. each, with intervals of 60 paces between regts. of which there are two, the frontage will be 651 yds. multiplied by 3 plus 100 yds. which equals 2053 yds.

With divisions composed of 3 brigades, of 3 regts. each, with intervals of 100 yds. between brigades, the frontage. 2053, multiplied by 3, plus 200 yds. equals 6259 yds.

Corps composed of three divisions of 3 brigades each with two intervals of 100 yds. each, gives a frontage 6259, which multiplied by 3 plus 200 yds. equals 18977 yds.

In the Artillery for a Corps, composed of 6 batteries of six guns each with caissons, battery wagons and forges, each gun horsed by six horses, each gun, caisson, battery wagon and forge is allowed 15 yds in depth; between muzzle of gun and horses following 4 yds. are allowed; therefore the frontage of a battery will be 14 multiplied by 15 yds. plus 13 intervals of 4 yds., which equals 276 yds; and six batteries will occupy a distance of 276 yds. multiplied by 6, plus 5 intervals of 28 and one-half yds., plus 28 and one half yards between the head and rear of the different arms of the service, equal to 1855 and one half yds.

In a Regiment of Cavalry composed of 3 squadrons of 4 troops each, each troop consisting of 80 men, the intervals between troops are 6 yds., and between squadrons of which there are two, 12 yds., giving a frontage of 320 yds. multiplied by 3

plus 66 yds. plus 24 yds. which equals 1050 yds.

The depth of a Corps composed of the three arms of the service is equal to 18977 yds. for infantry, plus 18572 yds. for artillery, plus 1050 yds. for cavalry, with intervals of 28 and one half yds. between infantry and cavalry, a grand total of 21939 yds., or 12 and 46 one-hundredth miles, while with an advance guard, 3000 yds. must be added.

To the foregoing must be added a pontoon train, ambulances and medical wagons with the necessary stores to alleviate the sufferings of the many wounded, and ammunition carts which carry some of the reserve supply.

An army, to compete with its enemy, must and probably will consist of more than one Corps; when we grasp the vast number of the men who compose it, and of its impedimenta, which must accompany it, carrying forage, food, tents, medical supplies, and ammunition, we can comprehend the magnitude of the operation, and wonder how such a machine does its work without hitches.

On the 4th of May, 1864, the Army of the Potomac, over 100,000 strong, built over and crossed the Rapidan by five bridges, and marched a distance of over 20 miles the same day, and this in the face of an active, well appointed, and ably commanded army.

Its train of over 4000 wagons, if placed one behind the other, would cover over 36 miles.

Such work requires a brain of no ordinary character, and this was that of the Chief of Staff. We make no comment, but ask those who read to reflect upon this matter, which has been compressed in a few lines.

To show the immensity of such an undertaking we submit the following to prove what length of time must elapse before the last man moves, when a small command consisting of a battalion of infantry, one battery of artillery, one squadron of cavalry, is leaving its barracks, at the rate of march of 3 miles an hour including halts.

A Batt. of Infantry equals 180 yds., a Battery of Artillery equals 276 yds., and a Squadron of Cavalry equals 338 yds., a total of 794 yds. At 3 miles an hour, each mile will take 20 minutes, each yd. will take 20 divided by 1760 yds. in a mile, equal to one eighty-eighth of a minute; 794 yds. divided by 88, gives 9 for an answer; therefore 9 minutes must elapse before the last man leaves the barracks.

Suppose this column deploys for action, the infantry forming on the left of the road, the artillery coming into action on the right of the road and in line with the infantry, the cavalry forming on the right of the artillery, the last two to move at a trot, after the infantry have left the road.

The infantry before its last man has left the road must move 180 yds., which will take 2 and one twenty-two sixtieths of a minute.

Now Cavalry in addition to moving over its own length must move over the distance occupied by the artillery in column of march, plus the interval between these arms, plus the frontage of the artillery in action, which distance will be as follows:—

Length of battery in column 276 yds, interval between infantry and artillery 28 and one half yds., frontage of battery in action 19 yds. multiplied by 5, which equals 95 yds. Interval between cavalry and artillery 28 and one half yds. Space occupied by cavalry in march 338 yds., a total of 776 yds. before the last man is in line of battle.

At a trot a horse covers 235 yds in a minute; therefore it will take the cavalry 2 and twenty-six sixtieths of a minute before they are in line of battle: re-

ducing fractions, we find that it will take this small force to march, and form line of battle, roughly about 14 and one half minutes.

How accurate must be the calculation for an army, so that there shall be no interference one with another!

The above computations were called forth by "The Life", quoting from "Swinton's" remarks on this operation. "Mine Run". See page 244, 245 of the "Life".

After the "Mine Run" affair, Lee disposed his army as follows: Hill's Corps near, and guarding the fords of the Rapidan, Ewell's at Orange Court House, Longstreet at Gordonsville, each of them a little more than a day's march from each other, thus presenting a fine opportunity for engaging each of them separately when the weather was favorable.

During a winter some days present themselves when the weather is severe, freezing the roads and streams. Plans anticipating such conditions had been drawn up by the Chief of Staff, when this chance so eagerly waited for was ruined by the receipt of a telegram from Gen'l Butler at Fortress Monroe, asking the cooperation of the Army of the Potomac in furtherance of his plan for the release of the prisoners of war held at Richmond, Va., Washington directing cooperation. Accordingly Sedgwick, then in command, made a demonstration in his front, all flank movements being impracticable by reason of weather and the roads, though before doing so a telegram was written by the Chief of Staff, and signed by Sedgwick, which stated that "the demonstration might spoil the chances for the future". See page 72, Gettysburg to the Rapidan.

The demonstration at Morton's Ford proved that had the roads and weather been suitable for moving the army, a well arranged plan for surprising them at the ford and throwing a large force quickly over the river would have been successful; their intrenchments taken at this point and at Raccoon's Ford, would have been turned, and their army encountered in detail. See same authority p 74.

Had the weather been freezing, the demonstration would have been converted into a real one, and the Confederate Army beaten; but the query arises to whom should the credit of this victory belong: not to Sedgwick, for he was only temporarily in command, and could have had no plans, for such are not made in a short time, and the permanent Commander was at that time absent. Would it be given to the Chief of Staff, whose plans they were? And would the "Life" have devoted more than two lines to describing this operation?

Lee saw the point and corrected his position at once; the opportunity passed, and never presented itself again.

We fail to see in what manner the Army of the Potomac gained in the "superiority of numbers," unless it be by the addition of the 9th Corps, whose strength was made up mostly by men who had just entered the service; old soldiers well know how much reliance can be placed in such troops. The mobility of the Army was lessened by the breaking up of two Corps, distributing them amongst the other three; for in the country (wooded) in which the army was then moving retarded marching resulted from the excessive strength of the Corps.

Corps of less strength would have answered the purpose better, would have been more directly under the eyes of their Commanding Officers, and time would have been gained in the receipt of orders, while the time in making connection, each with the other, would have been shortened.

The Chief of Staff of the Army of the Potomac was in favor of small units, and gives his reasons for such preference. See page 3 of the Virginia campaign of 1864 and 65.

As to the Corps commander who "unwittingly twice robbed Meade of victories through incompetence", and the "advancement of Grant", we have this to say. Meade had with him not only the opportunity but the means to rid himself of tools which could not hold their edge, and failing to use them, cannot complain of the presence of the Lieut. Gen'l in the field with the army which he, Meade, commanded. *See page 260 of the "Life"*

It is one of the principles of law, that no man can take advantage of his own wrong. *See page 260 of the "Life"*.

We dissent from the views as expressed on page 262 of the "Life", of Meade surprising Lee on four different occasions: it was not he, but the admirable Chief of Staff of the Army of the Potomac, who surprised Lee on these occasions; his eyes saw farther into those matters than Meade's. The evidence exists in serial nos. 45, 48, 49, war of the Rebellion, official ~~records~~ *records*, and his dispatch ~~put~~ *book* on file at the War Dept. U. S. A.

We now notice that for the first time the Chief of Staff's name is mentioned on page 266 of the "Life"; previous to this naming, any reader would have derived the impression that such an office was useless to the Commander of the Army of the Potomac, for on all the pages which have preceded no. 266 there is no mention of that name in that capacity. This could not have been an oversight on the part of the Biographer, but has arisen from his desire to put forward the claims of his man in stronger light, but as we have said above "it being determined to move by Lee's right flank, Humphreys, Meade's Chief of Staff was requested by Meade to prepare a project for the movement. Humphreys sketched two plans, one of them turning Lee's right by the Catharpin and Pamunkey roads which was adopted, and in conformity with it Humphreys prepared the order".

At this stage of this review of the "Life" we make this statement: all of those able movements previous to the arrival of the Lieut. Gen'l and his accompanying the Army of the Potomac in the field, were not the results of the brain of Meade but were due to the brain of his Chief of Staff, and it was due to him that "during this whole period the Union army met with not a single reverse or disaster, although Lee tried against Meade's armor (not Meade's but Humphrey's) every spear that he knew how to wield". See the Despatch Book.

The writer of this review believes that when the history of that war is written, Humphreys' name will appear in letters of gold, and his great services in that great struggle will receive their reward.

As to the battle of the Wilderness, we have this to say: Lee moved quicker than he did at Mine Run, and endeavored to strike us in flank, whilst in march his movement forced us to halt and fight.

The orders from Hd. Qrs. of the Army of the Potomac dated May 7th, 1864, at 3 P. M. for the Cavalry were as follows: "13, Major General Sheridan commanding Cavalry Corps will have sufficient force on the approaches from the right to keep the Corps commanders advised in time of the approach of the enemy". See p. 425, appendix G, of the Virginia campaign 1864 and '65.

Upon arrival at Todd's Tavern at midnight of the 7th of May, 1864, two divisions of Cavalry were found encamped there, and not where they should have been under the above quoted order.

Duplicating the orders "with his own hand" were of no avail to us, for then the roads to Spottsylvania from our right were in the hands of the enemy, and this fact was known to the Chief of Staff, at the date of their being written and sent.

The "intelligent use" of the cavalry at that time was useless. We are not criticising anyone in this reply but the writer of the "Life". Acknowledging that Cold Harbor was an important point to the army "and on its extension on the left", it was of more importance to us for the contemplated crossing of the James River, as from that place roads lead down to the points which had been selected for the crossing, and that was the reason why it was of such vast importance to the army. See page 307 of the "Life".

On page 322 of the "Life" we are informed: "The details of the movement upon Petersburg from Cold Harbor had been elaborated by Meade and Humphreys, the two great masters of logistics in the Union army, with a care that left nothing unprovided for". Now turn to page 201 of the Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 65, and see what the Chief of Staff has to say upon this same subject.

"In preparing the programme of the movement, it appeared to me (equivalent to the pronoun I) important that Gen'l Warren should move out the Long Bridge road, not only far enough to cover the crossings of the Chickahominy by the army, but so far as to hold the bridge over the White Oak Swamp, and to look towards the three roads to Richmond already mentioned, which substantially met at Riddle's shop, about a mile in advance of the position General Warren was directed to take.

"He could not well advance to Riddle's shop, since that would have exposed him to an attack in rear from White Oak Bridge. It was expected that such a movement by General Warren would deceive Lee, and give him the impression that the Army of the Potomac was advancing upon Richmond, or if intending to cross the James, that it would do so near Malvern Hill, at City Point, or above. The movement made the desired impression upon him, and to a greater extent than was contemplated, for as we shall see farther on, he was uncertain what the Army of the Potomac was doing until the afternoon of the 17th of June".

At that time (the 17th of June, 1864) three Corps were at Petersburg, Va., and again on page 214, of the same work, we find the facts stated as follows for the 16th of June, same year: "At half past ten A. M. he (Lee) telegraphed Beauregard that he did not know the position of Grant's army, and could not strip the north bank. At 3 P. M. he telegraphed he had not heard of Grant's crossing James River. At that hour only the Sixth Corps and Wilson's cavalry remained on the north bank".

We have convicted the writer of the "Life" of appropriating for his hero that which does not belong to him. But further, we find in Mc Clure's Magazine for the month of May, 1898, some reminiscences of Charles A. Dana, Ass't. Secretary of War who was with Gen'l Grant. On page 35 of this magazine appears the following:

"The Fifth Corps having prepared the way, the whole army left the lines about Cold Harbor on schedule time, just as soon after nightfall on the 12th as its movements would be concealed from the observation of the enemy. It was in drawing orders for such complicated movements as these, along different roads and by different crossings, that the ability of Gen'l Humphreys, the Chief of Staff was displayed. Everything went perfectly from the start".

We again assert that it was the Chief of Staff's projects which were responsible for the surprise of Lee on four occasions, viz, "Manassas Gap, Rappahannock Station, Mine Run, and the winter reconnoissance under Sedgewick", and in this we are supported by the unanimous voices of all officers of the Army of the

Potomac, to whom Humphreys was well known.

These four examples just stated, the project for crossing the James River (elaborating), and the forcible impression made upon Lee just related, together with the instructions prepared for the assault upon Petersburg on the explosion of the mine, to be related further on, form brilliant examples in the art of Strategy, Logistics and Tactics, stamping the author of them a consummate commander, and it has been said of him, "If fortune had favored him with independent command, it is certain that the country would have been the gainer". See the memoir read before the National Academy of Sciences, April 24, 1885, page 11.

Respecting the mine at Petersburg, Va., on page 330 of the "Life" there is an encomium bestowed upon the Commander of the Army of the Potomac by the Commanding General of all the Armies of the United States. We quote it: "Meade's preliminary orders were so exact as to cause Grant to say, at the later investigation, that they could not be improved upon with all the light of subsequent results, and that if they had been obeyed Petersburg would have been captured".

Remembering what has been said of the Lieut. Gen'l by the writer of the "Life" we are surprised that his testimony should be brought forward to the support of Meade, but that our readers may know who was the author of the project for the assault after the explosion of the mine, they are referred to Appendix, page 429, of the Virginia Campaign of 1864 & 65.

The office of Chief of Staff was not a clerkship for the recording of the orders of the Commanding General of the Army of the Potomac, neither was it a fifth wheel. That office was distinct and separate, as has been clearly defined in this reply. Were it clerical, that position would have been spurned by Gen'l Humphreys, whose high spirits and just regard for the rights of the office were well known to the army.

We notice in reading the "Life" that whenever the Commanding General of the Army of the Potomac has need of assistance in maintaining his position, (according to the ideas of his Biographer) the Chief of Staff is brought forward in support, thus proving his opinion as of great weight, though the readers of the "Life" would not suspect his presence with that army, and his assistance to it, in the chapters which have preceded that numbered 18.

We gratefully acknowledge the intended compliment, but declare in the same breath that placing him merely upon the same platform cannot be entertained for one moment, of one who possessed such commanding abilities, not only in science and letters, but in that of the Art of War.

Of the disaster which befell the 2nd Corps at Ream's Station in August, '64, we read on page 336 of the "Life": "It was reported that the enemy was moving on the Halifax road, and Wilcox was ordered to use the Jerusalem Plank road, thus giving him a march of twelve miles". Now turn to page 280 of the Virginia Campaign of 1864 & 65 and see what the Chief of Staff says of this movement: "But by the plank road his (Wilcox's) march was twelve miles long (about the same length as that of Mott's troops), whereas had he gone by the railroad, which continued open until five o'clock, he would have had not more than five miles to march and would have got to Hancock by half past four or five, and managing his movement skillfully, might have taken a part of the enemy's force in flank or rear".

The Virginia Campaign of 1864 & 65 is the history of the labors of one man, related in such language that one does not perceive that the author is telling his readers what part of the work he performed; but one who reads closely, can see

what he did,—a duty not of a brilliant character, because the work was of the closest character, but all the more arduous, in as much as each fact had to be given its full value before action could be taken, and when it was weighed, results followed of great benefit: nor was he absent from the field of battle in which he gloried; his fingers were upon the pulse of each great struggle; and when he gave his opinion it was acted upon at once; never a mistake was made by him; we are therefore surprised at the ingenious manner in which the historian of the "Life" has turned this work to glorify the one man.

If it be true as related on page 3 of the "introductory" to the "Life" that the Commanding Gen'l could tell at any time of the night when firing occurred, exactly what troops were engaged, "and if occasion required, he made the disposition of his army without needing to consult a map", then this acquirement, must have resulted from his association with his perfectly "polsed" Chief of Staff, who possessed this peculiar gift to a degree remarkable, and this is the first time we are made aware some one else had it. We should certainly have heard of it from our connection with the Hd. Qrs. of the Army of the Potomac.

We now return to page 5 of the "introductory" chapter which states as follows: "In his address before the Society of the Army of the Potomac, June 12th 1899, Courtlandt Parker quotes from a letter written by Gen'l Lee after the war as follows: 'Meade in my judgement, had the greatest ability. I feared him more than any man I ever met upon the field of battle'. He also quotes Jefferson Davis as saying; 'My idea is that Meade was the most skillful general in the Federal army. Gen'l Lee once said to me, that he could understand the movements of all the generals in the Federal army easier than those of Gen'l Meade'. In a letter to the present writer, dated January 31st, 1887, Mr. Davis said: 'I had a high opinion of and sincere regard for General Meade, both of which were manifested long before the war'".

If that which has just been quoted be true, there was good reason for it on the part of Lee, who might say it for the purpose of exalting his own ability, but whilst so doing, it is very probable, he was praising some one else inferentially, the one we speak for. Alas he cannot do so now, but were he living the author of the "Life" would be required to take back very, very many of "the interpretations put upon such facts (for which) the author is alone responsible".

Mr. Davis and Gen'l Humphreys were friends long before the Civil War: the former gentlemen had the faculty of discovering men of ability, men who would be willing horses, who would work, and no matter what was the amount required of them, would accept other matters equally as heavy, requiring research, and the consuming of that delicate substance called "grey matter"; nor was Mr. Davis wrong in his selection of Gen'l Humphreys as such a man.

We have the following from the lips of Gen'l Humphreys, who saw a letter written by Mr. Davis to a friend, this friend showing that letter to the General, who told of it to his very dear friend, Bvt. Major General John Watts De Peyster, of Tivoli, Dutchess County, New York, who in a notice of the death of Gen'l Humphreys, published it amongst other matters pertaining to the General. This particular phrase can be found on page 5 of the pamphlet and reads: "On the other hand, one of the leaders of the Rebellion, in many respects its Arch magus, after the four successive changes in the command of the Army of the Potomac, observed: 'They have not got the right man yet, and they never will have him until they appoint Andrew Atkinson Humphreys'"; again same page. "An officer in the Rebel Army, who occupied a very conspicuous position, a hard

military student, and well versed in military operations, remarks in substance, that 'while he looked upon Hancock as the best fighter in the Army of the Potomac, Humphreys was best fitted to command it'. "Humphreys' leadership and soldiership", was the attest of a veteran observer, "were so unobtrusive that the country was not aware of what an able man it possessed in him." A Major General, himself very distinguished, experienced and esteemed, who occupied a position which gave him the amplest opportunities of judging, said that he "considered Humphreys, take him all in all, the best General in the Army of the Potomac, or the best fitted to command it." Another officer, whose peculiar, varied and constant service gave him unusual advantages for judging and comparing, said a very handsome thing of Humphreys: "For general as well as intimate acquaintance with the country in which he (Humphreys) was operating, and the troops against whom he was engaged, in fact, the general relative situation of affairs, Humphreys was second to no other Union general." Another gallant soldier remarks, "Take him all in all, soldiership, culture, science, generalship, manners, lines of thought, social relations, dispositions, intention and energy, friendship and affection, he realized the words of another unfortunate, the poet, George Brookford, singing over the grave of a national hero.

'The noble heart, the master mind,
The chief that knew no fear,
And leaves no warrior peer behind,
Lies sleeping soundly here.
When riding 'mid the battle's blaze,
His eye with soul afire,
The traitor foe stood still to gaze,
And wonder and admire.'"

General Humphreys, (we cannot find a better expression than that stated on page 16 of the "Life") would have scorned "to have taken credit for another's work"; that "was imposible to him" and "unworthy of a soldier and a gentleman".

It would have been far better had the curtain which has screened the lives of Gen'ls Meade and Humphreys remained down, but taking up exultingly the gage of battle which has been cast before him, the writer performs a duty which is considered sacred.

It is with deep regret that he is compelled to speak as he has done, for both were members of the same Corps, and friends of long standing.

On November, 25th, 1864, Major General Humphreys was assigned to the command of the 2nd Corps, a duty which was far more pleasant than the thankless position of Chief of Staff to one who never did anything for him, yet relied upon him to pull the Commanding General out of a bad position.

Henry H. Humphreys,

Highland Park, Lake County, Ill.
July 3rd, 1901.

that each gained some advantage of position, but each exhausted his own strength in so doing; while for the want of a general purpose and a general commander to direct and concentrate the whole, it all amounted to nothing but heavy loss to ourselves. General Wright remarked confidentially to a friend that all of Meade's attacks had been made without brains and without generalship".—"Recollections of the Civil War, with the Leaders at Washington and in the Field in the Sixties. By Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War from 1863 to 1865, New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1899, (pp. 226-27.)

Aftermath.

In regard to Meade's failure to attack Lee at Williamsport and Falling Waters there is one remarkable circumstance which does not seem to have ever appeared in print. The writer was of the most intimate possible terms with many of our most notable Union generals, among these particularly with Major-Generals James B. Fry, Provost-Marshal-General, and Abner Doubleday, both at Washington after Gettysburg. They told him that when Meade was before Lee on the Potomac, they knew that Lincoln telegraphed to Meade "to attack Lee, hit or miss—that if he failed, to produce this telegram in extenuation of his failure and throw the whole blame upon him, the President, and that if he were victorious to destroy the telegram and take all the glory to himself." That Lincoln did so was corroborated by a remark which he made to another friend, another Major-General, that "twice the Army of Northern Virginia had been delivered, horse, foot and dragoons, into the hands of the Army of the Potomac, and that he was so disappointed, that if, he were the Disposer of Events, he did not know if he would do it a third time." These were not his exact words, which were so terse and emphatic, that it is most politic not to repeat them verbatim.

Major-General George W. Cullum declared that the writer's memory was so trustworthy in his reports of conversations that the notes of a stenographer, taken down at the time, could not be more correct. And General Fry averred that the writer's report of a certain conversation was as perfect, some time afterward, as if he had written it down while it was occurring. Major-General A. A. Humphreys was the writer's dearest friend, and his criticisms are as patent to memory as if they had been stereotyped. The record of Dana in regard to Humphreys appeared in his published Memoranda. In his published obituaries of Humphrey and of Meade, the writer's views of Meade's irresolution have been in print for many years, and therefore they cannot be charged as opinions *apres coup*. He has been all over a large portion of the ground between Meade's headquarters and the Potomac, and considers that all the accidents of the fields of operations were in favor of the Army of the Potomac. General Doubleday declared that the River was "swimming" at the time—that is in full flood with rapid current; yet, nevertheless, Lee was enabled to escape with impunity.

The writer would have added his information in full to the preceding pages, but he is far advanced in his 81st year, and broken with the consequences of two painful attacks and one terrible attack of the grippe, and therefore does not seek a controversy. But those who know him intimately will testify that his memory was never more tenacious, and that his mind is as clear if not clearer than it ever was. These remarks are penned in justice to the memory of Humphreys, than whom he never met a superior as a soldier and general in any one respect, or a grander man; Humphrey's only peer in his memory was Major-General George H. Thomas, while the latter's peer as an imposing specimen of mortality he never did meet in human form and magnanimity.

